

# UCV Interspiritual Centre Task Force Report

949 West 49<sup>th</sup> Ave @ Oak Street, Vancouver, British Columbia

**18 November 2011**

## Part 1: Task Force Work and Recommendations

### 1. Direction from the UCV Congregation

**Mandate given to UCV Board from the Unitarian Church of Vancouver (UCV) congregation, June 2011:**

- create a task force to explore fully the potential of site co-location with like-minded organizations (such as ISC) under an interfaith and community arts umbrella, fostering diverse spiritual expression;
- consider a change of signage on the UCV site, with an overarching title that promotes an interfaith concept and community arts activities; and
- report progress on these efforts at the fall 2011 AGM.

### 2. UCV Board Action:

July 2011: The UCV Board of Trustees approved the following motions:

- that an Interspiritual Centre Task Force be created to:
  - a) explore compatible, practical, and fiscally responsible options for establishing an Interspiritual Centre at the UCV site, and
  - b) recommend appropriate signage for the UCV site in support of an Interspiritual Centre, &
  - c) make a progress report to the congregation at the fall 2011 AGM;
  - d) make other reports and recommendations to the board as considered appropriate.
- Further moved & seconded: that Rainer Borkenhagen and Keith Wilkinson be appointed as Co-Chairs of the Interspiritual Centre Task Force; and that UCV members, adherents and others be asked to serve on the Interspiritual Centre Task Force. (Committees represented on the task force, in addition to B&G, to be decided by Rainer and Keith.)

### 3. Summary of UCV Interspiritual Centre Task Force Actions

Jul - Sep 2011	Co-chairs met to develop a strategy for task force work for 2012. Reserved several URLs that might suit an Interspiritual Centre Studied Constitution, Bylaws and website of InterSpiritual Centre of Vancouver Society (ISC); Researched 25+ similar organizations and potential benefactors.
Sep - Oct 2011	Broadened UCV Inter-spiritual Centre Task Force membership to include Steven Epperson, Michael Clague, Elisabeth Geller and Ariel Hunt-Brondwin, but found meeting times difficult to schedule;
11 Oct 2011	With Steven Epperson, Co-Chairs met with 4 representatives of the ISC to discuss common interests and needs; identified four plans to develop together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) <i>shared vision plan</i></li><li>b) <i>inter-spiritual programming plan</i></li><li>c) <i>major donor plan</i></li><li>d) <i>short-term space use plan.</i></li></ul>
18 & 31 Oct 2011	UCV President, ISC President, and ISC Coordinator met to advance these plans

- Nov 2011 Rainer reviewed with Hans Elfert possibilities and costs of signage changes to better reflect range of UCV site users and to support future donor requests.
- Nov 2011 Task Force members finalized a draft report for Board review and amended the report to reflect Board input.

#### **4. Definition of “Interspiritual”**

- 4.1. In this document, the term “interspiritual” refers to an inclusive approach to affirming and promoting the spiritual and ethical well-being of individuals regardless of their religious or spiritual affiliations or the absence of such affiliations. Interspiritual practices include and go beyond traditional interfaith practices which usually focus on dialog amongst practitioners of established religious traditions.

#### **5. Task Force Conclusions**

- 5.1. The mission, vision and values of ISC and UCV are highly compatible.
- 5.2. UCV represents 100 years of thought and action in Vancouver and 500 or more years of thought and action in Europe, North America and Asia to implement Unitarian principles; this work and tradition should be honoured, protected and expanded.
- 5.3. ISC represents at least 6 years of thought and action focused specifically on creation and funding of interspiritual programming and an interspiritual centre for Metro Vancouver that includes and goes beyond interfaith thought and action in support of spiritual and ethical development for individuals and for people affiliated with non-traditional religious, ethical and spiritual communities; this practice of outreach and inclusiveness should be honoured, protected and expanded.
- 5.4. Development of the UCV site for interspiritual work is consistent with UCV’s history. UCV has a history of extending its reach to organizations with similar values. This is reflected in the diversity amongst current UCV space license holders and community partners.
- UCV site users currently include:** Oak Counselling Services Society, Chor Leoni Men’s Choir, Elektra Women’s Choir, Vancouver Bilingual Preschool, Pacific Inter-Christian Fellowship, InterSpiritual Centre of Vancouver Society, Jewish Seniors Alliance of Greater Vancouver, vendors engaged in the Oak Street Farmers’ Market and periodic use by the Memorial Society of BC and various recital and musical organizations.
- UCV community and other collaborations currently include:** Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (Community Kitchen Program), UCV’s Downtown Eastside Community Ministry, UCV’s Outreach Opportunity Fund Recipients, Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) Social Responsibility Monitoring Group, Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) Board, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Refugee Program), and the United Nations Association (Gibbard Awards).
- 5.5. UCV’s central location and long history of successful programming and ISC’s expanded reach and past investigation of potential benefactors in support of a clearly articulated vision are complementary strengths.
- 5.6. Joint efforts of ISC and UCV could bring substantial spiritual, social and financial benefits to both organizations.

## 6. Recommendations from the Task Force

The task force recommends:

- 1) That UCV sign a letter of intent (LOI) with the InterSpiritual Centre of Vancouver Society (ISC) to build upon the complementary strengths of the two organizations in order to: advance the missions of the two organizations; expand the use of the UCV site by organizations with compatible values; strengthen connections in the broader community with individuals and organizations with similar missions, visions and values; and bring greater visibility to the work of both organizations through collaborative communications strategies.
- 2) That collaboration begin immediately between UCV and ISC in planning **interspiritual programming and events** to begin in 2012 both on and off the UCV site with ISC taking the lead and UCV providing program input, communication with UCV networks and complementary programs where suitable.
- 3) That collaboration begin immediately between UCV and ISC in considering options for **improved short-term space** use at the Oak Street site and that UCV participants include representatives of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, the Administrative Manager and the Parish Minister, and that consideration include possible use of the UCV sanctuary for use by groups in addition to the UCV congregation.
- 4) That a **Joint ISC/UCV Steering Committee** be formed to oversee the work of the other task forces, recommend a suitable business model for a shared venture, ensure that both vision and financial sustainability are addressed in the planning and implementation of initiatives, and recommend signage for the site that honours the work of both organizations and serves the shared vision for the site.
- 5) That UCV representatives on the **Joint ISC/UCV Steering Committee** include representation from the current UCV board.
- 6) That, when the timing is considered appropriate by both parties, a **Joint ISC/UCV Visioning Task Force** be formed to draft a shared vision statement to guide the collaborative work of the two organizations and the use of the Oak Street site in the future, and that this work include appropriate consultation with the respective memberships of the two organizations and include attention especially to the emerging needs of the next generation.
- 7) That, subsequent to agreement on a shared vision, a **Joint ISC/UCV Benefactor Task Force** be formed to build upon the donor research completed by ISC in recent years to create a presentation for submission to prospective donors requesting support for development of the Oak Street site and endowment of the programs and operations to be conducted by organizations at the site in support of the ISC/UCV shared vision.
- 8) That the **Capital Campaign** approved by UCV in Nov 2011 to raise between \$100,000 and \$300,000 for urgent and high priority capital improvements at the UCV site be planned to complement anticipated Joint ISC/UCV fund-raising for major site redevelopment and operating and program endowments.
- 9) That progress on these initiatives be reviewed at six month intervals by the UCV board and plans adjusted as deemed appropriate by the board.

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